

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please find below the replacement sheet for page 15:

such as "tree", "telephone", etc.). Task words are those specific to a particular service, and a subset of all content words. For instance, in a banking application: 'bank balance'; 'transfer'; 'statement'; 'account'; 'operator'; 'overdraft'; 'date'; 'percent'; 'pounds'; 'dollars'. In a banking application with several services, there will be a corresponding number of task word subsets of content words for making a transfer between accounts; ordering a statement; or checking a balance etc. Function words are words which are not content words but add to the grammatical correctness of the phrase, for example, 'of', 'the', 'and', 'a', 'when', 'how', 'is', 'was' and other auxiliary words, articles and conjunctions. Phatic words add no specific lexical or grammatical information, but affect the perception of the sentence (such as "oh"). Stylistic words include words like "should" and "gimme". In this embodiment, five distinct categories and one task category are used but more distinct and more task categories may be used, with a corresponding increase in the size of the category code. Figure 6 is an example dictionary with word types indicated.

Referring again to Figure 4, search engine 52 is for extracting a word from the ASR text and querying the dictionary for the category code which it passes on to the count engine 56.

Count engine 56 is for counting the number of words in the ASR text belonging to each category. It comprises a counter for each distinct lexical category and each separate task category: a content word counter; a task counter; a function word counter; an extra linguistic word counter; a paralinguistic word counter; and a stylistic word counter. It also comprises a total word counter. Each bit of the category code is checked and the corresponding counter is incremented if set. After the ASR text has been analyzed the counters contain the final result.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 10, page 17 with the following rewritten paragraph:

The process steps of the lexical analyzer 50 are described with respect to Figure 5. After dialing into an IVR 10, a caller 26 speaks a response which is recorded and processed by the ASR 16 to get a text string (start step 5.1). The text string is retrieved (step [[52]] 5.2) by the lexical analyzer 50 and a first words or words are identified (step 5.3) by segmentation of the text string by identifying groups of the characters which are separated by spaces. A query is sent (step 5.4) to the dictionary 54 to locate the first word. A category code is extracted (step 5.5) from the dictionary 54 and returned to the lexical analyzer 50. The code is used by the counter engine 56 to increment (step 5.6) the word counters for the array of word types. The next word and subsequent words in the text string are dealt with in a similar manner (step 5.7) by looping back to the extract word step using the next and subsequent words and searching (step 5.4) the dictionary 54 as before. Once all the words have been queried using the database, the ratios are provided (step 5.8) by the ratio calculator 58 by dividing certain counts by corresponding counts. The decision logic 60 takes input from the calculator 58 of the structure ratio, the particular service ratio corresponding to the IVR prompt, the extra linguistic ratio, the paralinguistic ratio, and the stylistic ratio to estimate a competence value and select (step 5.9) a competence level. The result is fed back to the IVR [[10]] step 5.10 so that the next prompt can be personalized to the caller 26 before the process is ended (step 5.11).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 25, page 19 with the following rewritten paragraph:

In this example, for construct III, the caller 26 has provided more than expected (i.e. [[.]]) provided both the indicator of the service ("balance enquiry") and the appropriate data (the account number)). It is clear that a further weighting could be applied for such "over efficiency" or explicit fastpath methodology. Further, no account is taken in these examples of word rate (i.e. [[.]]) how quickly and fluently the input is provided) which would allow further differentiation of the overall decision on the type of prompt that should be played to the caller 26. For example, the faster the rate of delivery in example II above, without compromising the ASR result (i.e. [[.]]) without introducing recognition failures), the more mixed NOVICE/INTERMEDIATE decisions would shift to INTERMEDIATE.